Vol. VIII. Numb. 59

THE OBSERVATOR.

Farther Remarks on the News of resuming the Treaty of Peace. The Nation impos'd upon in our Treaties with France, *by a Cabal at Court in King* Charles *the IId's Time, tho' we then had some honest Men in the Ministry. How the* Romans *treated those, that under fraudulent Proposals of Peace, made wilful War. The Application to the* French *King. The Treachery of the* French *Government taken Notice of by ancient and modern Authors. If the Allies demand not only the Restitution of* Spain, *but the* French *King's renouncing it afresh for himself and his Posterity, and giving cautionary Towns, 'till it be perform'd, 'tis Justice, and no Hardship.*

From Saturday, August 20. to Wednesday, August 24. 1709.

Country-m. I Perceive the News of resuming the Negociations of Peace continues, Master; therefore I must pray you to go on with your Discourse on that Head.

Obs. In my last, *Roger*, I express'd my Hopes, that the Allies would consider what Sort of Person and Government they had to treat with, and demean themselves accordingly. We of this Nation are as much concern'd to do so, as any of the Confederates; for, as I have told you before, it was observ'd of us long ago by *Philip de Commines*, That the *French* always recover'd from us by Treaties, what we had gain'd from them by the Sword; and I remember, that our ill Conduct in former Treaties with this very *French* King, occasion'd the writing of a smart, but excellent Piece, in 1673, entitul'd, *England's Appeal from the private Cabal at* Whitehall, *to the Great Council of the Nation, the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembl'd.* That Piece is preserv'd in the *State-Tracts*, and may deserve the Perusal of the Greatest among us, as well as serve for a Caveat to those who shall have the Honour to be concern'd in any future Treaty with *France*.

Country-m. You say very well, Master; I am afraid there have been few Reigns, in which *England* has not had too just Cause for such an Appeal; but I hope we are come to an End of those Times, since we have Persons of known Ability and Honesty to their Country, in the Administration.

Obs. I hope so too *Roger*; yet we can never be too cautious. There were Persons of known Ability and Honesty sometimes employ'd in that Reign, and even at the very Time when this Appeal was writ: but the Cabal was too hard for them and the King too, tho' every one knows he was a Great and wise Prince, but he either wanted Courage or Liberty to make Use of his Wisdom; for having made himself a Slave to his Favourites, his Great Endowments were of no Use to himself or the Nation.

Country-m. Bless me! Master, how came that about? Could Favourites perswade so wise a Prince to act contrary to his own Inclination?

Obs. It happen'd to him, *Roger*, as it does to Gentlemen who have large Estates, but are so much given up to their Pleasures, or some other prevalent Passion, that they leave the Management of all to their Servants, who, in such Cases, seldom fail to make themselves rich, and their Masters poor. To make this plain to you, *Roger*, we are inform'd by that Appeal, that the King's Inclinations were right, and he was fully resolv'd to make good the Treaty of *Aix la Chappelle*, which was fram'd on purpose to keep *Lewis* the XIVth within Bounds. To this End, the King, without consulting the Cabal, promis'd to admit the Emperor into that Treaty; and order'd an Instrument to be prepar'd accordingly: But the Cabal soon defeated his Intentions; for Mr. Secretary *Trevor* being too honest, and not let into their Mysteries, they would not allow him, tho' it was his Province, to draw the Instrument, but took that Matter upon themselves; and the better to cheat the King and the Nation, they brought in a Draught that was reasonably honest at first; but for all the Secretary's Opposition, they manag'd the Matter so at last with the Help of Mons. *Colbert*, the *French* King's chief Minister, that it came to nothing. Nor were we alone in this Matter, *Roger*; for the *French* King had Pensioners in other Courts as well as ours, and particularly in that of the Elector of *Cologne*, whom they debauch'd from the Interest of his Country by his Favourites; and if you ask the Reason why, we are told in the same Piece, *That the* French *Pensioners would have it so, and the Elector's Favourites, the two Brothers* Furstenbergs, *were pay'd for it.*

Country-m. That's a paw Story, Master. What Mischief have unfaithful and covetous Ministers and Favourites done in the World? but how happy are we, that her Majesty and her Parliament have already fix'd the main Preliminary, *viz.* That we will listen to nothing less than an absolute Surrender of the whole *Spanish* Monarchy! Had King *Charles* the IId acted thus by Advice of his Parliament, there would have been no need of the Appeal you mention'd. But pray, Master, what do you think to be a proper Method of treating with such a Prince as the *French* King, in his present Circumstances?

Obs. 'Twill be reckon'd Presumption, *Roger*, for you or me to offer our Thoughts in such arduous Affairs. We shall be told by some People, *That the Cobler must not go beyond his Last*; and tho' it be the Duty, as well as Priviledge of every *Britain*, to offer his Advice for the Good of his Country, as well as it is of every private Man to bring his Bucket, in order to quench a Fire in his Neighbourhood, yet it may be both more safe and effectual to tell what has been advis'd by others in the like Case.

Country-m. Pray do then, Master; any Way so it be but done, will satisfy *Roger* and his honest Country Neighbours.

Obs. Then, *Roger*, I will begin with the Advice of a rampant but brave *Tory*, who acted a long Time under the Mask of a Whig, and a true Patriot, and that was *Julius Cæsar*, who, in his 4th Book of *the Wars of* Gaul, says, *That neither Ambassadors are to be heard, nor Terms accepted from those, who, under fraudulent Proposals of Peace, wilfully make War:* And that this has been the *French* King's constant Practice, there's no Man who knows any Thing of his History and Conduct in all the Treaties that ever he made, will offer to deny.

Country-m. You talk high, Master; what, not hear his Ambassadors?

Obs. Has he not chican'd with us in the Preliminaries, *Roger*? And did not he refuse to sign the Capitulation of the Cittadel of *Tournay*, both which he set on Foot by his Ministers to gain Time. It has been an old Practice of the *French* Court, *Roger*, to make their Ministers say what they would afterwards disown. *Lewis* the XIth serv'd *Charles* Duke of *Burgundy* in the same Manner. He sent his Chancellor to revile and rail up-

en him, as *Comines* informs us, at his Father's Court, but when *Charles* defeated him near *Paris*, and block'd him up there, he deny'd, when he came to treat, that ever he gave his Chancellor any such Commission. For my Part, *Roger*, I think the Allies have a Right to reject all Proposals that are not sign'd by his own Hand, counter-sign'd by his Secretary, and attended with a Surrender of such Places as may put it out of his Power to trifle any longer, or to gain Time; which is the only Thing he wants. He has given the Confederate Generals just enough Cause to say to him, as *Tully* said to the Princes of the *Nervij*, (the very Country where our Army now lies) when they propos'd Terms in the Name of *Ambiorix*, the famous General of the *Gauls*, 'That it was not the 'Custom of the *Romans* to listen to Terms from 'an Enemy under Arms; but if they would lay 'them down, make Use of him as a Mediator, 'and send Ambassadors to *Cæsar*, they might have 'Hopes to obtain from him what was just. The *French* King knows the Preliminaries already demanded by the Allies, which, if they think fit to enlarge, they have very good Reason; for without Security in their Hands, they are not to trust to his Treaties. He has made good the Character which was given that Government of old, *Roger*, by *Salvianus*, Bishop of *Marseilles*, Lib. 4. *de Gubernatione Dei*, viz. *Si pejeret Francus quid novi faceret qui perjurium ipsum Sermonis Genus esse putat, non Criminis.* i. e. *If the* French *King forswear himself, 'tis no new Thing, since he thinks Perjury to be only a Way of Speaking, but no Crime.* I chuse to translate it so, *Roger*, rather than apply it to the whole Nation, because they have Men of Honour, as well as other Countries, tho' if I should do so, Authors of good Note would justify me, particularly *Lymneus*, Not. Reg. Gall. L. 1. C. 3. who says of 'em, *Mendaces ac deceptores esse, ac fidei Lubricæ, res suas non minori scribere fide, quam agere, aliter sentire quam loqui.* i. e. *That they are Lyars and Deceivers, People whose Faith is not to be depended upon, who write with as little Honesty as they act, and speak otherwise than they think*; which, if ever it was true of 'em, must be now, when a long Course of Tyranny and Bigotry has almost extinguish'd all Sense of Honour and Vertue there, as they always do wherever they get the Ascendant.

Country-m. These are terrible Characters indeed, Master. You do well to quote your Authority for 'em; but what can be done with such a People?

Obs. Nothing, *Roger*, but for the bold *Britains*, and the other Confederates, to strike Home, 'till the *French* King renounce *Spain* afresh for himself and his Descendants, and give us such cautionary Towns, as may put it out of his Power to retract.

Country-m. O! but that's hard, Master, to make him dethrone his own Grand-son.

Obs. 'Tis not hard for a Man to be just, *Roger*, or to be forc'd to perform his solemn and repeated Oaths, that were ratify'd by all the Authority of *France* and *Spain*, by which he was oblig'd never to claim that Crown, or any Thing belonging to it, for himself or his Descendants; and since he took those Oaths then with a Design to break them, we have the more Reason to deprive him of all Opportunity of doing so now. Besides, *Roger*, of all People in the World, the *English* have the least Reason to abate him any Thing of what I propose; for his Predecessors serv'd those of her Majesty so, with Relation to *France*, as *Paulus Æmilius* tells us in the History of their King *John*, viz. 'That at the Treaty of *Chartres*, they oblig'd 'our two *Edwards*, the Father and Son, to abjure 'all their Pretensions to the Inheritance of the 'Crown and Kingdom of *France*. Nor did they give over the War, 'till they had all our Possessions in that Kingdom but *Calais*, and that also they took at last. But to demonstrate to you, *Roger*, that to oblige the *French* King to this Renunciation and Restitution, Justice, and no Hardship, I need do no more but put you in Mind, that his Father and himself, who each of 'em marry'd a Daughter of *Spain*, did, by their Marriage-Contracts, and other solemn Treaties, expresly abjure and renounce all Claim for themselves or their Posterity to the *Spanish* Crown and Dominions, otherwise the *Spaniards* would never have agreed to either of the Matches: and since no Body can say, but the two *French* Kings had it in their Choice to accept or refuse the Terms and the Ladies, 'tis nothing but just, that they should be oblig'd to fulfil the Contract; and if the Allies should insist on *Lewis* the XIVth's making good as far as he is able, the Damage he has occasion'd to *Europe* by his unjust War to possess himself of the Crown of *Spain*. *Grotius* in his Book of War and Peace, and others who have wrote upon that Subject, would justify them in their Demands. But more of this Subject, and of the *French* King's Treachery another Time, *Roger*; for I perceive some People are very willing to forget it.

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